

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13832 01 OF 03 151921Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 151905Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3153
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 13832

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, UR
SUBJECT: GEORGIAN PRESS PROVIDES FURTHER INFORMATION
ON DEVELOPMENTS IN ABKHAZI AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC

REF: MOSCOW 13473

SUMMARY: CC CPSU HAS ADOPTED RESOLUTION WHICH MEETS
MANY OF ABKHAZI DEMANDS, INCLUDING ROAD-BUILDING, A
STATE UNIVERSITY AND TELEVISION BROADCASTING, BUT
DOES NOT TRANSFER ABKHAZI AR TO RSFSR OR END DESIG-
NATION OF GEORGIAN AS STATE LANGUAGE. ABKHAZI
SUPREME SOVIET UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED CONSTITUTION
JUNE 6, AFTER WHICH MASS RALLY WAS HELD IN SUKHUMI
FEATURING SPEECH BY GEORGIAN FIRST SECRETARY SHEVARD-
NADZE, WHO GAVE RED BANNER AWARD TO ABKHAZI WORKERS.
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13832 01 OF 03 151921Z

FACED WITH APPARENT MASS DISSATISFACTION, CC ADOPTED
EXTRAORDINARY MEASURE RE-ALLOCATING SCARCE RESOURCES
TO ALLEVIATE LOCAL DISSATISFACTION. WE IMAGINE THAT
AS SITUATION COOLS DOWN SOVIET SECURITY APPARATUS
WILL BE TAKING CLOSE LOOK AT ABKHAZI LEADERSHIP.
WE ALSO SUSPECT THAT SHEVARDNADZE IS LOOKED UPON
LESS FAVORABLY IN THE KREMLIN TODAY THAN HE WAS A

SHORT TIME AGO. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. GEORGIAN REPUBLIC NEWSPAPER "ZARYA VOSTOKA" FOR JUNE 7 (COPY OF WHICH IS BEING POUCHED TO EUR/SOV)/DEVOTES ENTIRE FRONT PAGE AND LARGE PART OF SECOND TO ARTICLES AND AN EDITORIAL ON DEVELOPMENTS IN WAKE OF WIDESPREAD AGITATION IN ABKHAZI AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC (REFTEL). PRIDE OF PLACE IN NEWSPAPER GOES TO REPORT ON RESOLUTION BY CENTRAL COMMITTEE CPSU AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS "ON MEASURES FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY AND CULTURE OF THE ABKHAZI ARCTM RESOLUTION DIRECTS FACTORY EXPANSION AND CONSTRUCTION IN SUKHUMI AND TKVARCHELI; DEVELOPMENT OF MARSHY AND UNDER-USED LAND FOR SUB-TROPICAL PRODUCTION; DECREASED TIMBER PRODUCTION IN ABKHAZI AR AND LOWERED PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS FOR GEORGIA; RECONSTRUCTION OF BLACK SEA HIGHWAY DURING PERIOD 1979-1985, WITH BY-PASSES AROUND SUKHUMI, GAGRA AND THE HEALTH RESORT OF NEW ATHENS; SUBMISSION WITHIN FIVE MONTHS OF A PLAN FOR ORGANIZING A STATE UNIVERSITY IN SUKHUMI; TELEVISION BROADCASTING WITHIN THREE MONTHS BY A PORTABLE TV STATION AND IN 1980 BY A PERMANENT STATION; CONSTRUCTION DURING 1979-85 OF 100,000 SQUARE METERS OF HOUSING, HOSPITAL COMPLEXES TO ACCOMMODATE 1,000 PATIENTS, SCHOOLS FOR 10,000

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13832 01 OF 03 151921Z

AND PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS FOR 1,000; IMPROVEMENTS IN PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRANSPORT; SUPPLYING A SUPPLEMENTARY 2,000 TONS OF COAL IN 1978 AND 3,000 TONS IN 1979 FOR OPERATION OF HEALTH RESORTS; AND MEASURES TO INCREASE OUTPUT OF THE LOCAL PRESS.

2. ARTICLES DATED JUNE 6 FROM SUKHUMI DISCUSS THE UNANIMOUS APPROVAL BY THE ABKHAZI SUPREME SOVIET OF THE ABKHAZI CONSTITUTION (TEXT NOT GIVEN) AND A MASS MEETING OF ABKHAZI WORKERS GATHERED IN SUKHUMI'S LENIN SQUARE TO CELEBRATE THE EVENT. (PHOTO ACCOMPANYING LATTER ARTICLE SHOWS WHAT APPEARS TO BE TYPICAL ORGANIZED AND ORDERED SOVIET MASS MEETING.) ON PODIUM AT MEETING WERE ABKHAZI FIRST SECRETARY ADLEYBA, GEORGIAN FIRST SECRETARY SHEVARDNADZE AND THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF CC CPSU: DEPUTY DEPARTMENT CHIEF V.E. BROVIKOV, SECTOR CHIEF A.C. SENNIKOV AND DEPUTY SECTOR CHIEF V.V. VASILYEV. ADLEYBA REPORTEDLY OPENED MEETING BY NOTING SIGNIFICANCE OF FACT THAT CC RESOLUTION HAD BEEN ADOPTED DURING DAYS IN WHICH NEWLY-ADOPTED ABKHAZI CONSTITUTION WAS

BEING DISCUSSED IN REPUBLIC.

3. SHEVARDNADZE THEN PRESENTED RED BANNER AWARD
TO ABKHAZI WORKERS FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1977.
IN HIS SPEECH, SHEVARDNADZE LAUDS CC RESOLUTION FOR
STRENGTHENING LENINIST FRIENDSHIP OF PEOPLES,
DEVELOPING SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY AND DISCIPLINE, IN-
CREASING THE TEMPO OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND IMPROVING

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13832 02 OF 03 151928Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MOSCOW 13832

MATERIAL WELL-BEING AND CULTURAL LEVEL OF ABKHAZI.
HE GOES ON TO SAY THAT QUOTE THE DECREE GOES FAR
BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ECONOMY AND CULTURE.
IT IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT POLITICAL DOCUMENT,
WHICH WILL INDUBITABLY PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE IN
THE FASTEST POSSIBLE ERADICATION OF ALL EXTRANEIOUS
FEATURES, MISTAKES AND OMISSIONS OF THE PAST,
AS WELL AS IN OVERCOMING OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS,
UNFULFILLED WORK AND OMISSIONS IN ECONOMIC, ORGAN-
IZATIONAL-POLITICAL SPHERES, IN CADRE POLICY AND
IN THE COMMUNIST EDUCATION OF THE WORKING PEOPLE.
UNQUOTE. REFERENCES TO UNITY OF GEORGIANS AND
ABKHAZI ABOUND, AS DO FLOWERY TRIBUTES TO ABKHAZI

PEOPLE, THEIR TEMPERAMENT AND HISTORY. SHEVARDNADZE
CALLS HIS LISTENERS' ATTENTION TO EFFORTS GEORGIAN
CC HAS MADE ON BEHALF OF ABKHAZI DEVELOPMENT AND
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13832 02 OF 03 151928Z

REMINDS THEM OF KAPITONOV'S RECENT SPEECH (REFTEL).
TOWARD END OF SPEECH HE DESCRIBES THE HEARTFELT
GRATITUDE WHICH GEORGIANS AND ABKHAZI, AND ALL THE
PEOPLE OF SOVIET GEORGIA, FEEL TOWARD THE GREAT
RUSSIAN PEOPLE, FIRST AMONG EQUALS. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. IF ABKHAZI PRESENT AT MEETING APPLAUDED OR
GAVE ANY OTHER POSITIVE RESPONSES TO SHEVARDNADZE'S
SPEECH, "ZARYA VOSTOKA" DOES NOT NOTE IT. EVEN
SUCH HABITUAL BARN-BURNERS AS "HAIL THE GREAT
LENINIST BANNER" AND "GLORY TO THE LENINIST
CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE POLITBURO HEADED BY
LEONID IL'ICH BREZHNEV" GO WITHOUT THE USUAL
PARENTHETICAL NOTATIONS OF "APPLAUSE" OR "PROLONGED
APPLAUSE."

5. COMMENT: NATIONALISM CAN CUT MANY WAYS. THE
GEORGIANS, FRESH FROM THE SUCCESS OF OBTAINING
REVISION OF THEIR OWN DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO MAINTAIN
THE STATUS OF GEORGIAN AS A STATE LANGUAGE, HAVE
BEEN OUTDONE BY A MINORITY GROUP WITHIN THEIR OWN
REPUBLIC, A MINORITY GROUP WHICH APPARENTLY FINDS
THEIR TUTELAGE AS DISTASTEFUL AS THE MORE NATIONAL-
ISTIC GEORGIANS FIND RUSSIAN TUTELAGE. AS FAR AS
WE CAN TELL WITHOUT SEEING THE TEXT OF THE CONSTI-
TUTION, HOWEVER, THE ABKHAZI REQUESTS FOR AFFILIA-
TION WITH THE RSFSR AND LIMITS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL
STATUS OF THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE WITHIN THE AR HAVE
BEEN REJECTED, ALTHOUGH EXCEPTIONAL EFFORTS APPEAR
TO HAVE BEEN MADE TO MEET THEIR OTHER ECONOMIC
AND CULTURAL REQUESTS.

6. THE EVENTS IN THE ABKHAZI AR DEMONSTRATE ONCE
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13832 02 OF 03 151928Z

AGAIN THE CONTINUING POTENTIAL OF NATIONALISM
TO GENERATE A MASS RESPONSE WITHIN THE SOVIET
UNION. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOVIET LEADER-
SHIP'S RESPONSE TO THIS MASS MOVEMENT ARE ALSO
INTERESTING. THE LEADERSHIP INITIALLY TEMPORIZED
WHEN IT WAS FACED WITH A LARGE-SCALE DEMONSTRATION,

THEN STRENGTHENED ITS SECURITY FORCES IN THE AREA
SO THAT NO FURTHER TRULY SPONTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS
COULD OCCUR (REFTEL), WHILE AT THE SAME TIME MAKING
WHAT APPEARS TO BE AN EXTRAORDINARY DECISION TO
DIVERT SCARCE RESOURCES TO MEET MANY OF THE LOCAL
COMPLAINTS. THUS, ALTHOUGH THE ABKHAZI DID NOT
GET A FULL LOAF, THEY GOT A VERY SUBSTANTIAL HALF.

7. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE LAST ACT IN
THIS LITTLE DRAMA HAS NOT YET BEEN PLAYED OUT.
IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY, THE ABKHAZI ACCEPT THIS
OUTCOME AS THE BEST THEY ARE LIKELY TO GET AND
RETURN TO THEIR MORE NORMAL DAILY PURSUITS, SO
ALSO, WE IMAGINE, WILL THE SOVIET INTERNAL SECURITY
APPARATUS. ANY ABKHAZI WHO CAN BE IDENTIFIED
AS HAVING PLAYED LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THESE EVENTS
IS LIKELY TO FIND HIMSELF THE OBJECT OF SOME CLOSE
KGB SCRUTINY, AS WELL, PERHAPS, AS RETALIATION.

8. FINALLY, IT SEEMS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE
EVENTS IN SUKHUMI, FOLLOWING SO CLOSELY UPON THE
DEMONSTRATION IN TBILISI ON THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE
ISSUE, WILL HARM SHEVARDNADZE'S STANDING WITH THE

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13832 03 OF 03 151930Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MOSCOW 13832

CENTRAL CPSU LEADERSHIP. IF A SCAPEGOAT IS NEEDED,
SHEVARDNADZE WOULD SEEM TO BE THE BEST CANDIDATE,
UNLESS IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF GEORGIAN POLITICS
HE IS ABLE TO DEFLECT BLAME ONTO ABKHAZI AR
FIRST SECRETARY ADLEYBA. MATLOCK

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